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ABSTRACT

The use of videotape feedback in professional development is unique in that it allows the observed teacher to also become the observing teacher. Such self-observation can be an empowering experience for the teacher when the self-viewing is effectively facilitated within the perspective of the observation and feedback process. There are at least three dimensions to this process: (1) general ground rules which establish the context in which the videotape feedback process will occur; (2) identification of specific and general teaching skills which serve as a basis for observation and feedback (a content framework); and (3) a feedback structure which can serve as a guide for the facilitator (a process framework). Each of these dimensions is examined in this paper and a conceptual, yet highly practical model for facilitating videotape feedback is presented. (Author)

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When the Observed Becomes the Observer

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The use of videotape feedback in professional development is unique in that it allows the observed teacher to also become the observing teacher. Such self-observation can be an empowering experience for the teacher when the self-viewing is effectively facilitated within the perspective of the observation and feedback process. There are at least three dimensions to this process: (1) general ground rules which establish the context in which the videotape feedback process will occur, (2) identification of specific and general teaching skills which serve as a basis for observation and feedback (a content framework), and (3) a feedback structure which can serve as a guide for the facilitator (a process framework). Each of these dimensions is examined in this paper and a conceptual, yet highly practical model for facilitating videotape feedback is presented.

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When the Observed Becomes the Observer

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A picture is worth a thousand words.
We remember 20% of what we hear and 80% of what we see.

These familiar statements provide two of the many reasons why the use of videotape feedback of classroom teaching is an effective tool in improving teaching performance. The instant replay as an instructional device, the after the game playback analysis, and the slow-motion scrutiny of professional athletes is a common method of "re-viewing" performance. Such review is not as readily used by the teaching profession, perhaps because the benefits and effective use of video as a tool for professional growth is not widely known or understood by educators.

Videotaping, which provides a visual image of self, is a means whereby the observed can also be the observer. Such self-observation involves self-confrontation[1] and for that reason requires a mediator or facilitator. Like observation by another, self-observation and its facilitation is best accomplished when based on a firm understanding of the observation process. There are at least three dimensions to this understanding: (1) ground rules which establish the context in which the feedback process will occur, (2) a specific or general teaching skills framework which serves as a basis for observation and feedback (i.e, a content framework) and (3) a general or overarching framework which acts as a structural guide to the whole feedback mechanism (i.e., a process framework). Each of these dimensions will be examined seperately.

First, general ground rules serve to establish the context in which the observational feedback process takes place. The precepts described by Morris Cogan[2] in his concept of Clinical Supervision serve as an example of contextual ground rules. Such ground rules include:

- **Collegial relationship**: The relationship between the observer and teacher needs to be collegial despite of bureaucratic roles. Hierarchical relationships can be transcended by defining a collegial relationship in which the supervisor functions as a general authority on the teaching/learning process who values and respects the specific expertise and authority of the teacher in his/her own classroom.

- **Teacher goals:** In order for faculty development to occur, goals for the observation/feedback process need to be set by the teacher (At a minimum, there needs to be mutual agreement about the observational goals).

- **Congruency w/ goals and style:** Techniques and strategies offered by the supervisor need to be congruent with the teacher's teaching style, educational philosophy, values, and personality.

- **Growth approach:** This approach requires that the focus of the observations be on improving teacher strengths rather than eradicating weaknesses (deficit approach). Weaknesses can be dealt within the context of strengths.

A second dimension of observational feedback involves identifying either a specific or general teaching skills framework to serve as a basis for observation and feedback. A framework can be a specific system such as the Blumberg, Flander, Brown-Hoffman, Heidelback or Bellack systems[3]. Or, a framework can be a skill or group of skills that the teacher and supervisor or facilitating colleague identify and/or agree upon. Examples of such skill areas are providing reinforcement, giving instructional cues and directives, allowing adequate wait-time, and asking questions at a variety of cognitive levels. A developmental approach in which stages of teacher professional growth and accompanying teaching skills and perspectives can can serve as a general framework in addition to the more specific skills. Sherman[4] et.al., offers just such a general framework in his 4 -stage model of professional development.

The third dimension is the need for a general or overarching framework which acts as a guide to the whole feedback process. Particularly in videotape feedback the function of observation needs to be understood as

an examination of more than just what is said (goals or intents) and what is done (actions). Rather, it is an examination of the relationship between what is said and done; between the goals and the behaviors intended to enact those goals. This type of self-reflexive or double-loop learning [5] defines the observer's role as surfacing existing incongruities between the stated intents of the teacher and the teacher's actions in the classroom. Such inconsistencies or discrepancies result in "...an unsettled feeling in a person both cognitively and affectively....[which] tends to precipitate a search for modifications or change...".[6] Individuals generally change in such as way as to make actions consistent with intents rather than changing intents to match actions. The tension of discrepancy serves as a motivator for improved performance.

Since we live in a world that is not self-correcting, that is, double-loop learning is the exception rather than the rule, it is very common for an individual to unknowingly act against his/her own goals, intentions and espoused beliefs[7]. For example, the teacher who wants to promote student discussion but is having difficulty doing so will most likely be aware of the ways in which she promotes student discussion but will be unaware of the ways in which she inhibits students from openly expressing ideas and participating in a discussion. Not only is the teacher unaware of these inhibiting behaviors but she is also unaware that she is unaware of these behaviors! Hence, the first step toward a positive change for this teacher would be a realization and acceptance that while she is in many ways encouraging student discussion, discussion is being inhibited by some of her other actions. Such an awareness can emerge when the teacher is confronted with the relationship between her intentions and her actions in the classroom.

Since videotape feedback allows the observed to become the observer, the act of observation can be empowering to the teacher since it allows her to identify for himself some of the discrepancies between her actions and her intentions. Thus, the framework that can guide the overall observation/feedback process is one in which the viewing is used as an

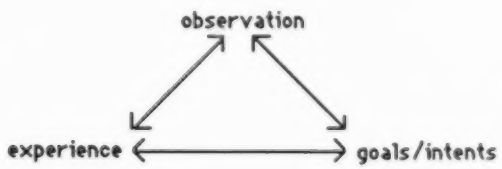
opportunity for the teacher to compare her intentions (goals) with her own observations. Further, she can also compare her intentions with , experience of teaching, and experience of self-observation interact with one another[8]. Triangulation, which is a measurement used in the observation of physical objects and locations, is a useful way to think of self-observation via videotape. There are two ways to triangulate: 1) by having one observer locate two objects and take the intersection of the two locations to identify the third location, or 2) by having two observers locate a single object and using the intersection of the two observations to identify a third location.

Triangulation, applied to self-observation, provides two conceptual approaches by which to think about, guide, and focus videotape feedback. The approach based on the single observer method suggests that the self-observer focus on the consistencies and inconsistencies between:

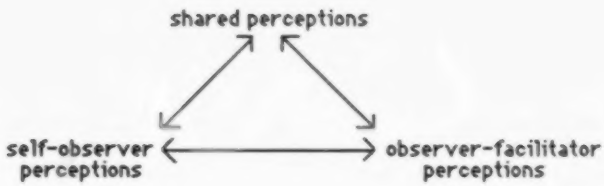
1) the remembered experience while teaching the videotaped lesson and his/her stated goals for that lesson;

2) the remembered experience of teaching the lesson and the experience while observing the videotaped teaching; and

3) the experience while observing and the stated goals for the lesson.



The approach based on the dual observer method of triangulation suggests the focus of the feedback be on the exchange of perceptions and experience of the two observers as they view the videotape. This involves identifying consistencies and inconsistencies of perceptions between the two observers.



In order for the teacher to critically observe self, s/he may need to be encouraged to distance herself from associating the feedback with the experience of being on tape and watching self. There are various ways of facilitating this distancing. For example, she may asked to watch the tape from the perspective of the students or even from the perspective of a particular student in the class.

There are numerous practical and specific issues involved in using videotape in the observation/feedback process. Just as in any observation/feedback session, ground rules need to be used to establish context for the teacher-observer relationship, specific teaching skills need to be identified to serve as a focus and provide a content framework, and an over-all understanding of the feedback process is necessary so that the facilitator has a process framework to guide the feedback process. An over-all process framework is most critical to a successful feedback session when video is used since the teacher—as—observer will have her own input into the direction of the observation session. Without an understanding of the process as a whole, the feedback conference can become a session of identifying disjointed teaching techniques and skills to be enhanced without a sense of the general patterns and directions of the teacher's professional growth and an increased self—awareness of that which the self is unaware.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Perlberg, A. (1984) "When professors confront themselves." In O. Zuber-Skerritt, (ed.)
Video in higher education. New York: Nichols.

[2] Cogan, Morris. (1973) *Clinical supervision*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

[3] Weller, R.H. (1971) *Verbal communication in instructional supervision*. New York: Teachers College Press.

[4] Sherman et.al., (1987) "The quest for excellence in university teaching". *Journal of Higher Education*. 48, 1, 66-84.

[5] Argyris, C. and Schon, D.A. (1974) *Theory in practice: Increasing professional effectiveness*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

[6] Sergiovanni, T.J. (1976) "Toward a theory of clinical supervision". *Journal of Research and Development in Education*. 9, 2, 20-29.

[7] Argyris, C. (1983) *Increasing leadership effectiveness*. Malabar, Florida: Robert E.
Publishing.

[8] Fuller, F.F. and Manning, B.A. (1973) Self-confrontation reviewed: A conceptualization for video playback in teacher education". *Review of Educational Research*, 43, 469-528.